

APRIL 29, 1976

INTELLIGENCE REPORT: CASE STUDY IN REFORM

ANNCR:

THE INVESTIGATIONS OF AMERICAN INTELLIGENCE ACTIVITIES HAVE COME FULL CIRCLE. TWO DAYS AFTER THE PUBLICATION OF ITS REPORT ON INTERNATIONAL INTELLIGENCE OPERATIONS, A SPECIAL SENATE COMMITTEE HAS MADE PUBLIC ITS FINDINGS ON INTELLIGENCE COLLECTION WITHIN THE UNITED STATES. IT WAS A REPORT OF DOMESTIC INTELLIGENCE ABUSES THAT SET OFF THE CURRENT INVESTIGATIONS, AND CHRIS KERN HAS SOME OBSERVATIONS ABOUT THE MOVEMENT FOR REFORM.

VOICE:

IN DECEMBER, 1974, NEW YORK TIMES REPORTER SEYMOUR HERSH WROTE THAT THE CENTRAL INTELLIGENCE AGENCY HAD VIOLATED ITS CONGRESSIONAL CHARTER BY SPYING ON ANTI-VIETNAM WAR PROTESTORS AND OTHER DISSIDENTS. HERSH'S REPORT, BASED ON INFORMATION FROM UNNAMED GOVERNMENT SOURCES, PROMPTED A SERIES OF PRESIDENTIAL AND CONGRESSIONAL INVESTIGATIONS. THIS WEEK, THOSE INVESTIGATIONS CULMINATED IN THE MOST EXTENSIVE SURVEY EVER PUBLISHED OF AMERICAN INTELLIGENCE ACTIVITIES.

MOST OF WHAT WAS INCLUDED IN THE REPORT BY THE SPECIAL SENATE COMMITTEE ON INTELLIGENCE HAD ALREADY BEEN DISCLOSED. THE COMMITTEE'S LIST OF ABUSES AND QUESTIONABLE ACTIVITIES WENT FAR BEYOND THAT OF THE INITIAL NEW YORK TIMES REPORT. THE SENATE COMMITTEE CHARACTERIZES THE DOMESTIC INTELLIGENCE OPERATIONS OF THE CIA, THE FBI AND OTHER AGENCIES AS A "PATTERN OF LAWLESS ACTIVITY" INVOLVING TACTICS OF INVASION OF PRIVACY AND HARRASSMENT "UNWORTHY OF A DEMOCRACY."

BUT THE CONGRESSIONAL INVESTIGATORS DID NOT CONFINE THEIR STUDY TO DOMESTIC INTELLIGENCE ACTIVITIES. THEY ALSO PROBED INTO THE FAR MORE DELICATE AREA OF INTERNATIONAL INTELLIGENCE. THEY REVEALED ATTEMPTS TO SUBVERT A DEMOCRATICALLY-ELECTED GOVERNMENT AND DISCUSSIONS OF ASSASSINATING FOREIGN LEADERS.

MANY IN THIS COUNTRY AND ELSEWHERE BELIEVE THAT THESE ARE THINGS THAT WERE BETTER LEFT UNSAID. TWO MEMBERS OF THE SENATE COMMITTEE THAT ISSUED ITS REPORT THIS WEEK REFUSED TO SIGN THE FINAL DOCUMENT, SAYING THAT IT WOULD INJURE AMERICAN INTERESTS. BUT ONCE STARTED, THE INTELLIGENCE STUDIES CREATED MOMENTUM OF THEIR OWN. THOSE WHO ARGUED FOR GIVING INCREASINGLY WIDER SCOPE TO THE INVESTIGATIONS INSISTED THAT PUBLIC CONFIDENCE THAT THE GOVERNMENT WOULD NOT IN THE FUTURE ACT ABOVE THE LAW REQUIRED THAT ALL QUESTIONABLE ACTIVITIES BE REVEALED.

A NUMBER OF TOP U.S. OFFICIALS HAVE EXPRESSED CONCERN THAT BY BEING FULLY CANDID WITH THE AMERICAN PUBLIC, THE CONGRESSIONAL INVESTIGATORS MAY HAVE DAMAGED THIS COUNTRY'S INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS. THOSE COMPLAINTS SEEM TO HAVE HAD ONLY LIMITED EFFECT. IT WAS DOMESTIC PRESSURE FOR REFORM, NOT AMERICAN INTERESTS OVERSEAS, THAT DETERMINED THE EXTENT OF THE DISCLOSURES.

THAT INSISTENCE ON DISCLOSURE AND REFORM MAY SEEM EXCESSIVELY MORALISTIC TO MUCH OF THE WORLD, AND IT MAY INDEED HURT AMERICAN INTERESTS. BUT IT APPEARS NOW TO HAVE BEEN THE INEVITABLE RESULT OF THE PROGRAM OF INTELLIGENCE GATHERING WITHIN THIS COUNTRY'S BORDERS. IT WAS A RESPONSE TO THE GOVERNMENT'S INVASION OF WHAT A U.S. SUPREME COURT JUSTICE ONCE CALLED "THE MOST COMPREHENSIVE OF RIGHTS

AND THE RIGHT MOST VALUED BY CIVILIZED MAN" -- THE RIGHT
TO BE LEFT ALONE.

GH/RCS